

*buddhavacana* in two different ways. One explanation holds that the Tripitaka is literally the word of the Buddha, spoken by him and committed to memory by his immediate disciples at the First Council just after his death. This literal interpretation maintains that the Tripitaka contains all the teachings that the Buddha gave from his first words after his enlightenment to his last teachings before his *parinirvāṇa*.

Another explanation, however, suggests a more liberal interpretation of the meaning of the “word of the Buddha.” The roots of this interpretation go back to the *Mahāpadesa-sutta* of the Pāli canon (*Dīghanikāya*, 123f.), which sets out a procedure and criteria for determining which teachings should be accepted as the “word of the Buddha.” This sūtra explains that if one receives a teaching from a variety of sources, including the Buddha, a SAṄGHA gathering, or a wise teacher, then one should test it by comparing it with an established core of teachings (*sutta* and *vinaya*). If the teaching in question proves consistent with the authoritative core of teachings then it can be declared to be the “word of the Buddha.” This second explanation makes the wisdom of the Buddha, rather than the historical career of the Buddha, the basis for the authority of the canon.

*See also:* Councils, Buddhist; Hermeneutics; Scripture

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## BUDDHIST STUDIES

*Buddhist studies* as an umbrella term for the disinterested or nonapologetic inquiry into any aspect of Buddhism or Buddhist traditions generally refers to the modern, academic study of Buddhism in all forms. This approach became possible only with the development in post-Enlightenment Europe of the notion of a comparative study of religions; as a product of this tradition, Buddhist studies has always assumed an outsider’s perspective, even when the scholars carrying out

such studies are themselves Buddhists. The field is therefore an inherently etic, rather than emic, enterprise. This is what separates Buddhist studies, also sometimes referred to as *Buddhology*, from the practice of Buddhism, or from what some today call *Buddhist theology*.

### Major trends

Several major trends may be noticed in the modern study of Buddhism, among which is a tendency to emphasize scriptures, doctrine, and history, with relatively less attention devoted to areas such as RITUAL and material culture. These trends may be attributed to a combination of individual and social-historical factors. Until recently most Westerners who studied Buddhism were first trained in the Western classics, and many were Christian missionaries, or at least deeply familiar with Christian history and thought. Thus, their attempts to locate in Buddhism features parallel to those they recognized in Christianity led them to concentrate their attentions in particular directions. The geographical regions of Buddhism that have received scholarly attention may also be closely mapped against political history: Colonialism and other aspects of Western expansion into Asia, including missionary activity, account for English scholarly interest in India and Ceylon, French interest in Southeast Asia, and German and Russian interest in Central Asia, and therefore for the comparative emphasis placed on those regions by scholars from those countries. Likewise, Japanese interest in Chinese Buddhism may be correlated not only to geographic proximity and to the fact that Japanese Buddhism traces its roots directly to China, but also to the period of Japanese military occupation of China before and during World War II, although these same factors apply in the case of Korea, which has nevertheless received considerably less Japanese scholarly attention.

In this light, it is no surprise that, for example, serious studies of Japanese Buddhism by Western scholars were a rarity until the post–World War II era, since the country itself was for most intents and purposes inaccessible to outsiders. Likewise, the tremendous flowering of studies of Tibetan Buddhism since the early 1960s is a direct result of the Chinese invasion of Tibet in 1950, and the subsequent escape to India and beyond of the DALAI LAMA and tens of thousands of other refugees in 1959, thus bringing the literary and living resources of the Tibetan Buddhist tradition into significant contact with outsiders for the first time. Among the most pronounced recent trends in con-

temporary Buddhist studies is a reduced emphasis on philological or textual studies and a greater stress directed toward cultural or theory-oriented work.

### Traditional approaches

Of course, Buddhists and non-Buddhists alike have examined and reflected upon the tradition from a variety of perspectives from a very early period. Traditional Buddhist histories attest to a long-standing and keen interest by Buddhists in their own history: Such histories include the Ceylonese *Dīpavāmsa* (*Chronicle of the Island*) and *Mahāvāmsa* (*Great Chronicle*) and other histories in Pāli; similar Southeast Asian works, often in vernacular languages; Tibetan works, including the famous histories (*Chos 'byung*) of BU STON and Tāra-nātha, as well as many other, often local, histories; and numerous Chinese, Korean, and Japanese works. While such histories tend to concern themselves with such matters as the relations between the Buddhist monastic communities and political rulers, a different although sometimes related genre of literature, the doxography or classification of tenets, attempts instead to provide a "history" of Buddhist doctrine. Perhaps the oldest clear example of such a text is Bhāvaviveka's *Tarkajvālā* (*Blaze of Reasoning*), but the genre reaches its full glory in the Tibetan *grub mtha'* and Chinese *panjiao* doxographical literatures. Such texts, however useful, are not histories as such, since their views on the developments of thought or what we would call intellectual history are polemical and not chronological; nor are they disinterested catalogues of doctrines or teachings, since they invariably seek to establish the ultimate primacy of the positions held by their authors. From the non-Buddhist perspective, texts such as Arabic "universal histories" and the accounts of early Christian missionaries have also noticed and described Buddhism since medieval times.

Most scholars of Buddhism concentrate on the study of Buddhism in one particular cultural area, be it India, China, Tibet, or the like. There are good reasons why this is so. Since Buddhism is so fully integrated into the cultural matrix of every land in which it is found, to study the Buddhism of a certain region requires not only a command of the relevant language or languages of a culture area, but also a knowledge of its history, literature, and so on. Although less common today, when many Buddhist scholars consider themselves first and foremost students of Buddhism, in earlier generations those who studied Indian Buddhism were primarily Indologists, as those who studied Chinese Buddhism were Sinologists. While fa-

miliarity with the wide range of cultural facts about India and China, respectively, allowed such scholars to approach Buddhism within its cultural context, there is also much to be learned by examining Buddhism across cultural boundaries, laying emphasis upon its translocal unity rather than on, or in addition to, its local particularity. The latter approach tends to locate the study of Buddhism nearer to religious studies, the history of religions, or comparative religion than it does to area studies.

To a great extent, modern Buddhist studies has emphasized the investigation of ancient texts and their doctrinal contents, with significantly less effort having been put into tracing the place of Buddhism within its broader social context, or into observation of the activities of contemporary Buddhists. The latter lack of emphasis may be seen even in the case of scholars who reside for long periods in Buddhist environments. Thus the great Hungarian scholar Alexander Csoma de Körös (1784–1842), who spent several years of intense study in Tibet, produced a number of extremely valuable studies concerning the mountain of Buddhist literature that he read there, but he recorded virtually nothing of what he must have observed of Buddhist monastic or lay life. This is an imbalance that still remains to be redressed sufficiently.

### Focus on India

Until recently, India, the land of Buddhism's birth, was the prime focus of the majority of scholarly attention paid to Buddhism. This tendency may be attributed directly to the widespread idea that the essence of a tradition is to be discovered in its origins, with subsequent developments demonstrating little more than the decay of a once pristine core. This idea in turn is fundamentally based on the evangelical Protestant anti-Catholicism of the nineteenth century, as can be seen clearly, for instance, in the case of the great pioneer of Indian and Buddhist studies, F. Max Müller (1823–1900). This Protestant view may also be seen in the priority given to studies of the earliest Buddhist scriptures. It can hardly be a coincidence that so many of those European scholars who first began to pay attention to the later, especially philosophical, literature of Buddhism were Belgian and French Catholics, rather than English or German Protestants. Japanese scholars, for different historical reasons, were traditionally more concerned with aspects of the later phases of Buddhism, until influenced by Protestant agendas beginning in the late 1800s. In particular, the significant attention they and other scholars from traditionally Buddhist cultures

have given to doctrine may be explained at least in part as a result of their research having evolved from a fusion of traditional sectarian scholarship with modern Western-influenced methodologies.

The rigorous study of Indian Buddhism began with the investigation of its literature in Pāli and Sanskrit. Among the most important early publications on Pāli were Viggo Fausbøll's 1855 edition of the DHAMMAPADA (*Words of the Doctrine*) and from 1877 the JĀTAKA (*Birth Stories of the Buddha*), and Robert Caesar Childer's 1875 *A Dictionary of the Pāli Language*. The accessibility of these texts tended to significantly influence the ways in which the most ancient Buddhist tradition was imaginatively reconstructed, and still does even today. In 1881 T. W. Rhys Davids (1843–1922) founded the Pāli Text Society in London, and it is to this society that we owe almost all publications of Pāli literature in the West, and most of the published translations of that literature. Recognition must also be given to the philological contributions of Danish scholars, chief among them the massive project of the *Critical Pāli Dictionary* begun in 1924 and ongoing.

Given its historically heavy bias toward textuality, among the most significant landmarks in the history of Buddhist studies must be counted the editions and translations of Buddhist scriptures and related materials. The publication in Japan between 1924 and 1935 of the Taishō edition of the Chinese Buddhist CANON marks a watershed. For the first time, scholars attempted to apply notions of textual criticism to the vast corpus of Chinese Buddhist canonical literature, and to organize its presentation in a scientific fashion; this edition is the standard one in use today. Likewise, the Japanese photo-reprint edition of a complete Tibetan Buddhist canon (the Peking Bka' 'gyur [Kanjur] and Bstan 'gyur [Tanjur]) in the early 1960s for the first time made these treasures widely available to scholars.

Owing to the disappearance of Buddhism from India in roughly the thirteenth century, none of what may have been the Sanskrit canonical collections of Buddhist literature has survived in its entirety, and its treatment has correspondingly been less systematic and comprehensive. The study of this literature began in 1837, when the British government resident in Nepal, Brian Houghton Hodgson (1800–1894), sent eighty-eight Buddhist Sanskrit manuscripts to Paris. These immediately came under the scrutiny of Eugène Burnouf (1801–1852), who in the fifty-one years of his life produced an astonishing body of work, the value of which persists to the present day. He was one of the

first Europeans to study the Pāli language carefully, which prepared him well for his work on the Sanskrit materials. Burnouf's *Introduction à l'histoire du Budhhisme Indien* (1844) made extensive use of these texts, as did his copiously annotated translation of the LOTUS SŪTRA (SADDHARMAPUNDARĪKA-SŪTRA), published in 1852. These works, along with Hendrik Kern's history of Indian Buddhism (1882–1884) and Émile Senart's (1847–1928) study of the life of the Buddha (1873–1875), were among the first careful scientific investigations of Buddhism carried out on the basis of a good knowledge of relevant sources.

Burnouf, who was perhaps not incidentally Müller's teacher, may be seen as the father of a Franco-Belgian school of Buddhist scholarship, for just as the regions that were studied may be roughly mapped against a political background, so too may we notice national or regional traditions of scholarship on Buddhism. To this Franco-Belgian school belong, among others, the Indologists Léon Feer (1830–1902), Senart, Sylvain Lévi (1863–1935), Louis de la Vallée Poussin (1869–1938), Alfred Fouche (1865–1952), and Étienne Lamotte (1904–1983), as well as the Sinologists Edouard Chavannes (1865–1918), Paul Pelliot (1878–1945), and Paul Demiéville (1894–1979). Most of these individuals in fact contributed significantly to more than one field, while nevertheless standing firmly in the philological rather than the more recent cultural studies camp. Feer, for example, edited, translated, and studied texts in Pāli, Sanskrit, and Tibetan, as well as other languages, while Lévi contributed to Indian, Chinese, Tibetan, and Central Asian studies.

At almost the same time that Davids and Burnouf were engaged in their textual studies, archaeological investigations of Buddhist sites by Alexander Cunningham (1814–1893), James Burgess (1832–1917), and James Ferguson (1808–1886), among others, were being carried out across India. In the north in particular, efforts to trace the locations central to the Buddha's life were guided by the archaeologists' reading of the recently translated travel account of XUAN-ZANG (ca. 600–664), a Chinese monk who visited India in the seventh century. This way of using non-Indian materials is typical: Until comparatively recently, texts in Chinese and Tibetan were studied much less for their own sake than for the light they might shine on India, and in fact the majority of texts in Chinese and Tibetan to which attention was been paid by scholars were translations into those languages of texts of Indian origin, rather than native works. It is only since the 1980s that significant interest has been directed

both at indigenous works and at the ways in which translations work not as calques of foreign texts but as localized adaptations of those works.

Despite this archaeological research, strictly historical studies of Indian Buddhism have been significantly less common than doctrinal investigations, one exception being studies devoted to AŚOKA. From the time of James Prinsep's initial decipherment in 1834, the inscriptions of the emperor Aśoka have fascinated researchers. Subsequently, scholars such as Georg Bühler (1837–1898), J. F. Fleet (1847–1917), Sten Konow (1867–1948), and Heinrich Lüders (1869–1943) paid careful attention to these and other more strictly Buddhist Indian inscriptions, although it was not until quite recently that attempts have been made to comprehensively collect these materials. In a number of innovative studies since about 1975, Gregory Schopen has revived interest in these vital sources. Inscriptional studies of Southeast Asian sources were carried out mostly by French scholars, while it is to Japanese scholars that we owed most of our materials on Chinese Buddhist inscriptions until very recently, when Chinese scholars themselves have taken up the task of their collection and study.

In significant respects, the directions taken by Buddhist studies have been steered by chance factors. Early interest in Pāli scriptures was not due only to the idea that they reflect the oldest, and thus the most original and pure, state of Buddhism, or to the fact that by virtue of being written in an Indo-European language they seemed linguistically less foreign to Europeans than texts in Chinese or Tibetan. It was also essential that the texts themselves be physically accessible, something that was possible primarily due to the European colonial presence in Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia. Correspondingly, it was Hodgson's gifts to Burnouf, and the existence of other manuscript collections in European libraries, along with the fact that Müller was encouraged in this direction by his Japanese students, especially Takakusu Junjirō (1866–1945), that facilitated and inspired early studies of MAHĀYĀNA scriptures. The influences on research priorities, particularly of Japanese ways of understanding Buddhist traditions, deserve to be further investigated. Great assistance was rendered to the investigation of Indian Mahāyāna literature by Franklin Edgerton's publication in 1953 of a dictionary and grammar of Buddhist Sanskrit; its importance can be judged by the fact that the dictionary is used even by scholars of Japanese and Chinese Buddhism.

Occasional chance discoveries of manuscript materials have also had an important impact on research agendas. The so-called Gilgit manuscripts, discovered from a stūpa in what is now Pakistan and published by Nalinaksha Dutt between 1939 and 1959, the Sanskrit materials discovered largely by German expeditions in Central Asia (and published primarily in the series *Sanskrithandschriften aus den Tufanfund*en), and the DUNHUANG manuscripts, mostly in Chinese and Tibetan, kept centrally in London, Paris, and Beijing, along with more recent finds in Afghanistan and in Japanese monasteries, have permitted scholars to uncover aspects of Buddhist thought and practice that had remained entirely unknown, had become obscured in later traditions, or had even been intentionally suppressed. The Dunhuang collections in particular, along with the wall paintings adorning the caves at the site, have proven so important that an entire field of Dunhuang studies has sprung up around their investigation. In addition to the *Lotus Sūtra*, so important in East Asian Buddhism and the recipient of much scholarly attention since the days of Burnouf, the PRAJÑĀPĀRAMITĀ LITERATURE has also been much studied, most notably by Edward Conze (1904–1979).

Although Western philosophers and historians of philosophy have rarely shown interest in Buddhist thought, this is one of the most active areas in Buddhist studies. The foremost scholar of Indian Buddhist thought was without a doubt la Vallée Poussin, who, in addition to producing significant editions of Pāli texts, edited, translated, and studied Madhyamaka texts such as CANDRAKĪRTI's *Prasannapadā* (*Clear-Worded Commentary*) and *Madhyamakāvatāra* (*Introduction to the Madhyamaka*) and Prajñākaramati's *Bodhicaryāvatārapañjikā* (*Commentary on Śāntideva's Introduction to the Practice of the Bodhisattva*), and texts of the logicians such as DHARMAKĪRTI's *Nyāyabindu* (*Drop of Logic*). La Vallée Poussin also translated with copious annotation VASUBANDHU's ABHIDHARMAKOŚABHĀSYA (*Treasury of Abhidharma*) and Xuanzang's Yogācāra compendium, the *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi* (*Establishment of the Doctrine of Mere Cognition*). In this way he almost single-handedly provided the basis for much of the subsequent study of Buddhist thought. Others who contributed importantly to this project include Lévi, who published a number of important Sanskrit texts, including some central to the YOGĀCĀRA SCHOOL, his Japanese student Susumu Yamaguchi (1895–1976), Gadjin Nagao, and Lamotte. Philosophical investigations of the Yogācāra and Madhyamaka traditions continue to occupy many scholars, among whom D. S.

Ruegg and Lambert Schmidthausen have produced outstanding work. Considerable attention has also been given to the later Indian logical tradition since the days of Theodore Stcherbatsky (1866–1942) in the pre–World War II period. Thanks to the efforts of Erich Frauwallner (1898–1974), especially in the decade after the war, Vienna became the center of such studies, carried on now by Ernst Steinkellner and his students and colleagues, including many young Japanese researchers.

Tantric Buddhism, whether that of India, Tibet, China, or Japan, has received comparatively little attention from scholars, no doubt due, in part, to the extreme difficulty of the subject. Its potentially titillating aspects have, predictably, attracted many who are more concerned with seeing in these traditions either esoteric truths or licentiousness, rather than properly understanding them as highly developed forms of the practical application of the complex philosophical systems developed out of the *Madhyamaka* and *Yogācāra* systems. Numerous publications purport to address the topic of TANTRA, particularly in Tibetan Buddhism, but the utility of most of these works is open to serious doubt.

### **Tibetan Buddhism**

For a long time, Tibetan Buddhist studies concentrated almost exclusively on making available Indian literature that had been translated and transmitted in Tibetan, despite the fact that among the very earliest scholars in the field were Isaak Jakob Schmidt (1779–1847), Anton von Schieffner (1817–1879), and W. P. Wassiljew (1818–1900), Russians familiar with the living monastic traditions of Mongolia in which were preserved the tradition of Tibetan Buddhist scholarship. Studies such as those of Stcherbatsky and his pupil Eugène Obermiller (1901–1935) on *Madhyamaka* philosophy and logic as well as historiography, while deeply indebted to Tibetan scholarship, nevertheless kept their prime focus on India, and the same may be said to some extent of the work of the Japanese pioneers of Tibetan studies, although Teramoto Enga (1872–1940), Kawaguchi Ekai (1866–1945), Aoki Bunkyo (1886–1956), and Tada Tōkan (1890–1967) all also spent time studying in Tibet itself. Especially since the massive Russian collections have never been widely accessible, the Japanese collections of Tibetan literature accumulated by these travelers, including both Tibetan translations of canonical materials and native works, were the most important resources available until the last quarter of the twentieth century.

Although some scholars, such as Giuseppe Tucci (1894–1984), had indeed studied Tibetan Buddhism itself, rather than merely seeing in Tibetan translations an otherwise unavailable source of Indian materials, it was the flow of Tibetans fleeing Tibet in 1959 that was decisive for the development of the study of indigenous Tibetan traditions, especially since many of the refugees were highly educated native scholars who were eager to share their knowledge with researchers in England, the United States, and Japan. When the Tibetans fled, moreover, they brought with them libraries of theretofore inaccessible textual materials that, thanks almost single-handedly to the efforts of E. Gene Smith of the U.S. Library of Congress, were reprinted and distributed around the world, making possible for the first time widespread access to the treasures of the Tibetan Buddhist literary tradition. A secondary factor in the development of Tibetan Buddhist studies has been the tremendous religious growth of Tibetan Buddhism itself in the West, made possible primarily by the presence of these refugee Tibetans, and the high profile of the DALAI LAMA on the world stage. Since this has contributed to a general interest in Tibet, one side effect has been an increasing interest in the academic study of Tibetan Buddhism. The same may be said for Zen Buddhism, in which the popularity of the religious practices has had the additional result of inspiring further scholarship on the tradition.

### **Chinese Buddhism**

What was true for Tibetan Buddhist studies also applies to many studies of Chinese Buddhist materials, namely that they were often engaged in with the goal of supplementing the study of Indian Buddhism, rather than for their own sake. This was the case with such works as the comparative catalogues correlating Chinese translations with their Pāli counterparts, or catalogues of Chinese translations of Indian texts. Yet significant investigations of Chinese Buddhism also have a long history. The combined efforts of scholars such as Tang Yongtong (1894–1964), Tsukamoto Zenryū (1898–1980), Demiéville, and Erik Zürcher have allowed us to begin to understand the overall trends of Buddhism in China, and the development of a true Chinese Buddhism, while recent studies by Antonino Forte, Michel Strickmann (1942–1994), and Victor Mair, among others, have opened up new avenues of inquiry into topics such as relations between the Buddhist monastic establishment and the state, esoteric traditions, and the role of Buddhism in the evolution of Chinese vernacular literature.

The CHAN SCHOOL of Buddhism, usually known in the West by the Japanese pronunciation *Zen*, has elicited much attention, although relatively little of this interest has translated into critical scholarship. Japanese scholars belonging to both the Rinzai and Sōtō schools have, of course, always been keenly interested in their own traditions, but it was the discovery early in the twentieth century in the Dunhuang manuscript collections of theretofore completely unknown Chan texts that shattered traditional mythologies, motivating a series of studies by scholars such as Hu Shih (1891–1962), Yabuki Keiki (1879–1939), and the famous D. T. SUZUKI (1870–1966), as a result of which it became more and more difficult to accept as fact the Zen tradition's own stories about itself. A more recent generation of scholars, prominent among them young Americans, was inspired and taught by Yanagida Seizan, Iriya Yoshitaka (1910–1998), and others, and continues to contribute to a radical rethinking of all aspects of the Chan school.

### **Japanese Buddhist studies**

Most research on Japanese Buddhism until quite recently has been limited to sectarian histories and doctrinal studies, although historians have also taken note of Buddhism as a social force in Japanese history. Traditional Japanese scholarship produced superb works of synthesis, including those concerning works of Indian origin in Chinese translation. Many of these have been of tremendous assistance to modern scholarship, as is the case with Saeki Kyokuga's 1887 annotated edition of the encyclopedic *Abhidharmakośa*; La Vallée Poussin's debt to this work can be seen on every page of his outstanding multivolume French translation (*L'Abhidharmakośa de Vasubandhu*, 1923–1931).

The bulk of Japanese scholarly attention, however, has been devoted to the background of contemporary Japanese schools, both proximately within Japan and more remotely in their Chinese antecedents. Thus scholars of Kegon, the Japanese branch of the HUAYAN SCHOOL, have studied the HUAYAN JING in Chinese translation, works of the Huayan patriarchs, and the works of Japanese Kegon scholars, while Tendai scholars have studied the *Lotus Sūtra*, and works of ZHIYI (538–597) and later TIANTAI SCHOOL masters, and of SAICHŌ (767–822) and his successors. In the course of such studies, generally little attention is given to other schools or to contextual data. While the value of such works, including for the study of Chinese Buddhism, should not be underestimated, by the same token its limitations must be recognized. Despite excellent

Japanese scholarship on Indian and Tibetan Buddhism beginning in the late nineteenth century, it was only well into the twentieth century that Japanese scholars began to apply anything like the same approaches to their own traditions, and even today most Japanese scholarship on Japanese Buddhism would be better classified as theology (*shūgaku*) than Buddhist studies.

Among the most important research materials resulting from this modern traditional scholarship are the editions of canonical works of the various sects; some of these works, such as the *Dainippon Bukkyō Zensho* (1912–1922), cross over lineage boundaries, while others, such as the collected works of great founders such as DŌGEN (1200–1253), KŪKAI (774–835), SHINRAN (1173–1263), and so forth, do not. This said, it is hard for those not familiar with the Japanese language to appreciate how truly vast and comprehensive is Japanese scholarship on Buddhism, much of which is not limited at all to the Buddhism of Japan. Momentous projects, such as Ono Genmyō's multivolume annotated bibliography of almost all Buddhist literature then known (*Bussho kaisetsu daijiten*, 1932–1935), or Mochizuki Shinkō's almost simultaneous publication of a massive encyclopedia of Buddhism (*Bukkyō daijiten*, 1932–1936), remain basic and essential research tools for the study of Buddhism, despite the advances the intervening years of study have brought. Japanese dictionaries of Buddhist technical vocabulary too, beginning with that of Oda Tokunō (*Bukkyō daijiten*, 1917) and including notably the more recent work of Nakamura Hajime (*Bukkyōgo daijiten*, 1981), have no good parallels in works in other languages.

Buddhist studies in other traditionally Buddhist countries has been less active. Certainly Sri Lankan scholars have devoted considerable attention to multiple aspects of THERAVĀDA Buddhism, particularly in Sri Lanka itself. The same might be said to some extent of scholars in other Southeast Asian countries, not to mention the studies of Korean Buddhism undertaken by Korean scholars, and very recently of Tibetan Buddhism by Tibetans. That much of this work is published in little-known languages, however, limits its broader influence.

### **Anthropological studies**

Somewhat unexpectedly, perhaps, the area of the Buddhist world that has received the most attention from anthropologists has been Southeast Asia, including Sri Lanka. These studies consider not only MONASTICISM, but the status of Buddhist institutions in lay society, Buddhism and politics, and other issues. The living

traditions of Chinese Buddhism received some attention from Japanese scholars, especially during the period of Japanese occupation, while the meticulous studies of Johannes Prip-Møller (*Chinese Buddhist Monasteries*, 1937) and the later investigations of Holmes Welch (especially *The Practice of Chinese Buddhism: 1900–1950*, 1967) have recorded a world that has now almost entirely disappeared. Surprisingly little work has been done on the contemporary Buddhism of Japan, despite the ease of access to monasteries and lay Buddhist centers, or on Tibet, although attention paid to the latter has increased recently. Despite considerable interest in the Buddhist monastic codes (*VINAYA*) from the earliest days of Buddhist studies through the recent work of Hirakawa Akira (1915–2002) and Schopen, little has been done to compare these classical prescriptive codes with actual Buddhist monastic practices.

### Buddhist art

The study of Buddhist art deserves its own treatment, in part because, unfortunately, it has yet to find its rightful place in the mostly text-based field of Buddhist studies. It remains true that most art historians are not sufficiently familiar with Buddhist literature or thought, and that most Buddhist scholars have, at best, only a passing familiarity with the tools and methods of art historians, although some pioneering art historians, such as Foucher, were thoroughly familiar with literary sources as well, and some textualists, such as Dieter Schlingloff, work comfortably with art historical materials. Nevertheless, it is impossible to understand Buddhism in any cultural context without an appreciation of its varieties of artistic expression. Beginning with the first modern encounters with Buddhist arts, however, scholars have attempted to understand their meaning and role. A great deal of attention has been given to the sculpture of the Gandharan region, most notably because of its obvious strong Greek influence, to Chinese monumental sculpture, Southeast Asian sculpture, Japanese sculpture and painting, and to Tibetan painting and bronze images. Studies remarkable for their depth and breadth include the Japanese multivolume examinations of the YUN'GANG and LONGMEN cave complexes, Tucci's monumental study of Tibetan art (*Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, 1949), and Dutch studies of the BOROBUDUR monument in Java.

Fields such as the study of Buddhist music and dance have been almost entirely ignored, despite their obvious centrality in Buddhist WORSHIP and the daily

life of both monastic and lay Buddhism in all cultural contexts. Likewise, it is only recently that Buddhist ritual has drawn the attention of investigators.

Thematic studies have occupied an important place in Buddhist studies. Chief among the topics of discussion for many years were the character of the Buddha, the date at which he lived, and the meaning of NIRVĀNA. More recently, issues such as the meaning of ŚŪNYATĀ (EMPTINESS) in the MADHYAMAKA SCHOOL, the status of experience and enlightenment in Chan, and, self-reflexively, how Buddhist studies itself should be carried out, have attracted considerable attention. It is likely that in the years to come, such more conceptual and theoretical studies, as well as comparative investigations, will become more common.

*See also: Languages*

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**BURMA.** See *Myanmar*

## BURMESE, BUDDHIST LITERATURE IN

Belonging to the Sino-Tibetan family of languages, Burmese constitutes the primary language of the largest ethnic group in Myanmar (Burma). Burmese

comprises two distinct styles, each with its own set of linguistic particles to mark the syntactical relations between words. Generally speaking, colloquial Burmese is used when people meet and talk; literary Burmese is used for published materials. And yet, colloquial Burmese sometimes appears in printed form, as in books that contain dialogue. Likewise, literary Burmese may be used in some spoken contexts, such as when news is read on the radio.

For purposes of this survey, the discussion of Burmese Buddhist literature will be divided into two parts: The first part distills developments in Burmese Buddhist literature from the twelfth century up to and extending into the nineteenth century; the second part focuses on relevant developments from the nineteenth century onwards.

### Twelfth to nineteenth centuries

Inscriptions or *kyok' cā* (stone-writings) make up the only form of extant Burmese writing prior to the mid-fifteenth century, and they continue to be an important form of writing throughout Myanmar's pre-British colonial period (the British completed their military conquest of Myanmar in 1885; Myanmar gained independence in 1948). The earliest Burmese inscriptions come from Pagan, a major city-state in central Myanmar that reached the zenith of its political and cultural development in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The inscriptions, primarily in prose, often record the meritorious deeds of kings and other laypeople, in particular the construction and donation of monastic and other religious buildings. The inscriptions also sometimes record Buddhist laws set down by kings. The earliest Buddhist law inscription, an edict on theft, dates to 1249.

The sixteenth through the nineteenth centuries witnessed the development of a large body of legal materials composed in manuscript form in Burmese, Pāli, and other languages (e.g., Mon). These legal materials attempt to encode, legislate, and offer precedents for Buddhist practice. Common to the legal literature were *rājasat*‘, which were laws set down by kings, and *dhammasat*‘, which were law texts written, for example, by monks.

Historical and biographical materials, such as *rājavān*‘ (historical accounts of the lineages of kings), are yet another type of Burmese literature with Buddhist elements in pre-nineteenth-century Myanmar. These materials recount the exploits and intrigues of rulers and others, their lines of descent, and their acts of